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HOLY RESOLUTIONS. K



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THE following paper was written some years ago. In the case of the writer, it has at least contributed to make him feel his own unworthiness, and his need of an Advocate with the Father. The perusal of it may probably suggest some hints for self-examination to others, and it is with that view it is published in the present form. It is not meant to say that the plan here sketched out is suited to the case of all. There is an endless variety in the circumstances, propensities, temptations, and habits of men, which renders somewhat a different course necessary in almost every separate instance; but yet there is a sufficient degree of resemblance in most men, to afford room for hoping, that such a publication as the present may not be without its advantages.

HOLY RESOLUTIONS.

SUNDAY.

BEING prevented by indisposition from attending public worship, I would employ this season of more than usual retirement, in reflecting on my obligations to God, engaging expressly to fulfil them, and imploring, through Christ, that grace, and those influences of his Spirit, which can alone enable me to do so. And may God Almighty grant, that my future life may evince my simplicity and sincerity in this exercise!

Having found, by lamentable experience, how adverse the cares of the world, the hurry and distraction of worldly business,

and the dissipation of worldly converse, are to the maintenance of a spiritual state of mind; and having also found how unfriendly a want of regularity in the duties of private prayer, and self-examination, and the study of the Scriptures, is to my improvement in right tempers and affections, as well towards God as towards my fellow-men, I am the more induced to form this explicit engagement in the presence of God, who knows the heart, hoping that through his mercy in Christ, its frequent perusal may be of use, in reclaiming my steps when they deviate from the right way.

I therefore, in the strength of Divine Grace, make the following

RESOLUTIONS.

1. I will regard the favour and everlasting enjoyment of God, as the end of all my

plans, and study to make the consideration of them influence, as much as possible, the minutest actions of my life.

2. I will regard the obedience, sacrifice, mediation, and intercession of Christ, as the only procuring cause of all those spiritual blessings which conduce to that end, as the pardon of sin, peace with God, and the sanctifying influences of his Spirit.

3. I will continually keep in mind my obligation to walk in Christ's steps, and to be holy as he is holy, as one, which if I do not fulfil, I shall in vain hope to enter heaven; and I will ever pray for the Spirit of God, in the belief, that through his operation alone, can this holy frame be produced.

4. I will cultivate an habitual sense of God's presence, and of my accountableness

to him; of the shortness of time, and of my obligation to improve it.

5. I will study for the future to appear well, not so much in the sight of man as in that of God; and to that end, will be particularly watchful against the love of human praise or distinction, and the fear of shame; desisting from my purpose when I feel these to be my only motives, and endeavouring by prayer to overcome them when I perceive them to mix with such as are more pure.

6. I will consider love to God and zeal for his glory as my highest duties, and study to improve daily in these divine affections; and I will judge of my progress in them, not by transient fervours of the mind, but by my habitual tempers, by my punctual performance of the self-denying duties of Christianity, by my cheerful acquiescence in all God's dispensations, and by the love, the

humility, and the meekness which I am enabled to exercise to those around me.

7. I will study to live a life of dependance on Christ and of faith in his word, making it the sole and exclusive measure of my belief and practice.

8. I will particularly study to restrain all wanderings of the mind, in the public and private exercises of God's worship; to banish, as much as I can, vain and worldly conversation and vain and worldly thoughts from my mind and lips on the Lord's-day; and to give all my household the time requisite for hallowing it.

9. I will guard against formality and vanity, especially in family worship; and fit myself, by previous reflection and prayer, for its due performance.

10. I will be particularly guarded against the intrusion of impure thoughts. I will turn away my eyes from beholding what might lead to them, shut my ears against polluting conversation, and restrain my tongue from every licentious word; and I will carefully avoid every circumstance which I know to have formerly excited improper feelings, and forbid my thoughts to dwell for a moment on past scenes of sensual pleasure.

11. I will watch against every rising of covetous desire; and while I carefully repress all tendency to improper expence, or the careless profusion of any of God's gifts, I will seek out proper objects with whom to share those good things of which God has made me the steward, and of which he will require an account. I will ask every night, " Whose distress have I this day relieved?"

12. I will no longer put off to a future day, or leave the business of the present day or hour, but will apply myself to it, deny myself to sloth and the love of ease, and exercise a constant and self-denying attention to what is my proper work.

13. I will keep truth inviolate in the smallest, as well as the greatest matters.

14. I will in no case affect knowledge which I have not.

15. I will read no book but with attention; and I will read none which tend to inflame the mind, or to excite improper sentiments.

16. I will be ready to communicate, and also to receive knowledge; and I will be open to conviction, ever receiving correction and reproof meekly and thankfully, never

questioning merely for the sake of dispute, nor ever retorting upon any reproof.

17. I will watch against all superciliousness in look or manner, all sourness of mind, in dispute, all impatience of contradiction in my intercourse with all, whether common acquaintance or the most intimate relative, as wife, brother, &c. and I will listen with patience and kindness to the arguments and reasonings of others, however impertinent they may appear at the moment.

18. I will also watch against a selfish and exclusive attachment to my own comfort, and study to be equally solicitous for the comfort of others, and to repress every rising of impatience at the trouble which this may occasion to me.

19. I will endeavour to cultivate a temper of more benignity towards all; and I will

attend more to the outward expression of love and kindness, never allowing passion to dictate what I may say, but studying to act by others as I could reasonably wish to be dealt with.

20. I will watch particularly against all hastiness of spirit towards inferiors, and especially those who need my help; but will listen composedly to their representations, and render them all the justice, and all the kindness in my power, consistently with my other duties.

21. I will not only not use railing words to any, but will guard against every circumstance in look and manner, which might tend unnecessarily to wound the feelings of others.

22. I will not allow the ill conduct of others towards me to lessen my kindness and good will to them.

23. I will not reprove my servants in anger, but in love; and be more anxious to remind them of their obligations to God than to myself.

24. I will not chide or correct my children in passion, nor use peevish language towards them; and previous to correcting them, I will use prayer to God; and I will not be turned aside by false pity, or by indolence, from duly correcting their faults, which I will ever remind them to be sins against God.

25. I will never use threatening language, but by way of prevention, and without any mixture of passion; and I will study, not to allow my voice to be elevated above its ordinary tone, in talking with any.

26. I will guard against all excess in eating or drinking; never allowing complaisance for any to mar for a moment the clear exercise

of my reason, or discompose my quiet, by leading me beyond the bounds of strict moderation.

27. I will, from this time forward, when not hindred by unavoidable circumstances, regularly devote *at least* one half hour in the morning, and one half hour in the evening, exclusively to those concerns which lie between God and my soul.

28. I will, every day, make the attainment of purity, humility, meekness, lowliness of heart, activity, watchfulness, calmness of mind, kindness of manner, sincerity, and spiritual mindednes, being the graces in which I conceive myself more particularly defective, the subject of special and earnest supplication at the Throne of Grace.

29. I will read every day in private a portion of Scripture, with meditation and prayer.

30. I will be daily engaged in the work of intercession.

31. I will, at least once every day, call to mind, with due solemnity, the innumerable instances of God's providential goodness to me, recollecting with deep self-abasement what I was in — in — and in —, and humbly adoring the infinite mercy of God, which has thus far caused me to differ.

32. I will also call to mind every day my lamentable failures in duty, my many actions wherby God has been dishonoured and my soul injured, even since it has pleased him to convince me of my obligation to love and serve him; and I will improve the remembrance as an incitement to greater watchfulness, circumspection, and self-distrust.

33. I will consider the study of my heart as one main business of my life; and I will enter every evening, if possible, into a serious

view of the past day, and of the manner in which I have kept this engagement, and into a solemn consideration of the fitness of my soul for entering on the eternal world.

34. I will anxiously study to reform whatever I shall find amiss; and of whatever defect in the performance of my duty I may be sensible, whatever corrupt propensity I may discover, of whatever sinful thoughts, words, or actions, I may have been guilty, I will endeavour to improve as an incitement more deeply to repent of sin, more highly to value the love of my crucified Redeemer, and more implicitly to rely on his atoning merits, for pardon and acceptance, and on the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, for victory over sin, and advancement in purity and holiness of heart and life.

May the Spirit of all Grace fill my heart with heavenly wisdom, and form me anew

in my Saviour's image ! May the bright example of Jesus Christ be ever before my eyes, and may his lessons be ever graven on my heart ! Through his blood may my defiled and guilty conscience be cleansed from all sin ! May he reign in my heart, and ever continue the object of my ardent desire, of my undeviating reliance, of my cheerful homage, of my lively and active gratitude, and of my highest love ! And may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of everlasting compassion, the God of grace and peace, sanctify me wholly, and through the blood of the everlasting covenant make me perfect in every good work to do his will, that I may be enabled ever to render to the Father, Son, and Spirit, one God, the praise and glory of all I have, am, or hope for ! Amen.

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